

Sponsorship Handbook



WOMEN *for* WOMEN
International



Dear Friend,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Women for Women International as a new sponsor in our global community of women. On behalf of all the women we work with, thank you for choosing to become a sponsor.

The Sponsorship Program is a direct, personal and hands-on approach to supporting women survivors of war as they move from victims to survivors to active citizens engaged in rebuilding their lives and communities. Sponsorship offers a constructive, dignified way for a woman to regain control of her life. This program helps bridge isolation and alleviates the suffering often experienced by survivors of war and violence.

As a sponsor, your support will provide the tools and resources your sister needs to rebuild her life after war. Your monthly contributions will allow your sister to obtain basic necessities for her family, like food, clean water, and medicine; to pay school-related expenses for her children; or to use the funds as seed capital to start an income-generating project. These funds also support your sister's year-long participation in our Renewing Women's Life Skills Program that will provide her with vocational and technical skills training and rights awareness and leadership education classes. Perhaps more importantly, your letters will provide an emotional lifeline to a woman who may have otherwise lost everything.

This handbook provides detailed information about your sponsorship experience. It includes information about corresponding with your sister, making your sponsorship contributions, the length of your participation, and other ways you can become involved with Women for Women International.

Throughout your time as a sponsor you will also receive email updates connecting you to the Women for Women International network; *Outreach*, Women for Women International's regular newsletter; and letters from your sister, if she is able to write to you. I encourage you to write to your sister, as it will enrich the personal element of your sponsorship and your participation in our worldwide network of women.

If, at any time, you have any additional questions about your participation, please visit our website at www.womenforwomen.org, email us at sponsorship@womenforwomen.org, or call us at 202.737.7705. We hope you find your sponsorship experience valuable and rewarding.

Thank you again for your commitment to supporting women survivors of war.

Sincerely,

Zainab Salbi
President and CEO

Sponsorship offers a constructive, dignified way for a woman to regain control of her life. This program helps bridge isolation and alleviates the suffering often experienced by survivors of war and violence.

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The Sponsorship Experience

Program participants are enrolled in the Sponsorship Program for one year. Each month, your sister will receive a portion of your sponsorship contribution as direct financial aid that will allow her to obtain basic necessities for her family, like food, clean water and medicine; to pay school-related expenses for her children; or to use the funds as seed capital to start an income-generating project. Perhaps more importantly, your letters will provide an emotional lifeline to a woman who may have lost everything due to war.

Your contributions also support your sister's year-long participation in our Renewing Women's Life Skills (ReneWLS) Program that will provide her with rights awareness and leadership education, vocational and technical skills training and access to income generation support. The structure of each country's program varies slightly due to social, economic, political, cultural and religious factors. However, in all countries where we work, your monthly support is instrumental in ensuring that your sister receives the tools she needs to regain her strength, stability and stature after war.

We make every effort to match you with a woman at the beginning of her participation in the program. However, you may be matched with a woman who has already completed a portion of the year-long program. You will be notified if your sister has had another sponsor during her participation.

Rights Awareness and Leadership Education

Throughout her year in the program, your sister will meet regularly with a group of approximately 20 women for rights awareness training sessions. When women develop and cultivate leadership skills, they gain the power to assume leadership positions in their villages, actively participate in the reconstruction of their communities and build civil society. These meetings also act as a network of support for each of the women in the program. For a woman who may have lost everything due to war and violence, this network becomes a critical building block as she tries to regain control of her life after war.

Trainings are facilitated by local women trainers who use Women for Women International's training manual *A Woman's World*. The training is designed to help women understand their unique rights: politically, as victims of war and community violence, and as a force to bring about stability; economically, in understanding their economic value to family and society; and socially in acquiring skills to fight discrimination and domestic violence, and obtaining basic knowledge of human reproduction, nutrition, stress management, hygiene and the prevention and treatment of prevalent diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Vocational and Technical Skills Training

A part of ReneWLS is to build on and strengthen women's existing skills and to introduce new skills in traditional and non-traditional fields so women can access future employment opportunities. Local instructors provide vocational skills training in carpentry, leatherwork, bee keeping, jewelry-making, traditional folk art, shoe repair and other areas so women can find a job or start their own home-based businesses. Technical training in savings, basic bookkeeping and marketing may also be provided.



"I have wanted to do something to help empower women worldwide for a long time, however it seemed such a huge task and I didn't know where to start. This program is wonderful because it enables us women who are blessed in small ways to share our blessing with those who still need blessings, woman to woman, one woman at a time."

—A sponsor to her Nigerian sister

Income Generation Support

To help women transform their new skills into financial independence and sustainability, Women for Women International provides microcredit loans and other income generation support. This support helps ensure that women are provided with an option to continue supporting themselves and their families after their participation in the Sponsorship and ReneWLS programs ends.

Women for Women International's microcredit lending program brings much-needed investment capital directly to the most excluded women in rural and urban communities. This program allows a woman to finance a business or income-generating project and build a credit history. In countries where it is available, the first-time average loan is \$100 — \$300 and is granted initially for small business enterprises. Eventually, as a business grows and the client pays off her loan, a larger loan may be made to expand the scale of the operation.

Other income-generating opportunities are available, especially in countries where Women for Women International does not offer microcredit loans. In Rwanda, for example, we encourage women to form cooperatives to start local businesses, and work with them to develop business plans; in Kosovo, we operate several cooperative stores where women can sell products they make. Women for Women International's online Virtual Bazaar also offers an international market where women from all of

the countries where we work can sell their handcrafted goods. Providing these and other options for a woman to earn an income and support her family helps her to become an active, contributing citizen in her own society.

Evaluation and Graduation

Approximately three months before your sister graduates, you will be notified that her participation in the program is coming to an end so you can prepare to send her a final letter. Your sister will meet with a Women for Women International representative, who will discuss her economic situation and her progress towards self-sufficiency. We will share the results of this evaluation with you once your sister finishes the program.

At times, a woman may leave the program because she finds a job, moves, or is no longer able to attend for personal reasons. When your sister graduates or leaves the program, you will be automatically matched with a new woman

unless you request to end your sponsorship. You will receive information about your new sister at the same time you receive the evaluation information for your former sister. If you have made contributions in advance, your remaining contributions will be forwarded automatically to your new sister.

After your sister graduates, your sponsorship may be transferred to a woman who has already completed a portion of the program. These transfers occur when another sponsor is unable to complete her sponsorship commitment. This means that you would now be matched with a woman who has less than one year remaining in the program. When you receive a letter introducing you to the new woman you are sponsoring, it will indicate whether your new sister has had a previous sponsor.

If at any time you have questions about your sister's participation in the program, please contact your sponsorship coordinator at sponsorship@womenforwomen.org or 202.737.7705.

Your Sponsor ID Number

Your sponsor ID number is the key to ensuring that your contributions are correctly credited to your account and that your letters are delivered to your sister as quickly as possible. Please make sure you have it available whenever you call us and that you write it on your checks and all correspondence with your sponsorship coordinator and your sponsored sister. This is particularly important if the name on your check does not match the name on your account. Your sponsor ID number can be found on your introductory letter titled "Meet Your Sponsored Sister" in your Sponsorship Welcome Kit or on your monthly commitment statement. If you cannot locate your ID number, contact your sponsorship coordinator at sponsorship@womenforwomen.org or 202.737.7705.

Corresponding With Your Sister

Getting to know your sister can be one of the greatest rewards of sponsorship. Letters are an excellent source of support and inspiration for your sister. Do not underestimate the power and importance of your letters. They do make a difference.

If you like, you can use the postcard included in your Sponsorship Welcome Kit to begin your relationship with your sister. Feel free to be creative when sending your letters – we encourage you to send a greeting card or postcards from your town, or to design your own stationery for your correspondence.

On average, it takes three months for your letters to reach your sister and for her letters to reach you. After you send your letters to our office in Washington, DC, we forward them to our offices overseas twice a month. Your letters are then translated by staff members in our field offices and given to your sister. If your sister is not literate, the letters will be read to her, and she can dictate a letter to you. Your sister's letters to you will be translated, sent to our office in Washington, DC, and then mailed to you.

Letters are translated by staff members in our field offices who speak English as a second language. To help our staff translate and deliver your letters quickly, we ask that you type your letters when possible. If you choose to write your letters by hand, please print or write as neatly as possible – this will help ensure that your letters reach your sister faster.

In the rare case that you receive a letter from your sister that you deem inappropriate, please understand that this is not intentional and may be due to cultural differences or mistakes in translation. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

We strongly encourage your sister to respond to the letters you write to her. However, in some cases your sister may choose not to write. As you know, the women in Women for Women International's programs are dealing with multiple hardships that may not allow them the time or energy to write to you. Some are suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Your sister may be unable to write for these and other reasons. Please do not stop writing. Your letters do help, and in time, your sister may write back.

What to Write About

Letter writing can be fun and easy. Here are some topics you can write about to help you begin to forge a relationship with your sister:

- Your life: family, work, friends, hobbies, interests, where you live
- Everyday events: birthday celebrations, taking a new job, holidays
- What compelled you to become a sponsor

Sponsors have at times expressed concern that it may be insensitive to write about family or a vacation to a woman who may have suffered an incredible amount of loss. While you should be sensitive, hearing about the joys of your life may be meaningful to a woman who is struggling for a sense of normalcy in her own life. Expressing an interest in your sister's life can also be a great letter-writing tool.

For example, you can inquire about:

- Her community and everyday life and the cultural events and holidays that are specific to her nation and/or region
- How she became involved in Women for Women International

Please do be sensitive to cultural differences as your sister may have suffered persecution because of her class, race, gender, religion or ethnicity. If your sister is a survivor of conflict, please do

not ask about the atrocities committed against her and her family. As time goes on, she may disclose these things to you if she feels comfortable sharing.

Sending Your Letters

To ensure that your letters can be delivered to your sister, we ask that you include the following information at the top of each letter:

- Your sister's full name
- The name of your sister's woman group
- Your sister's country
- Your sponsor ID number
- Your full name

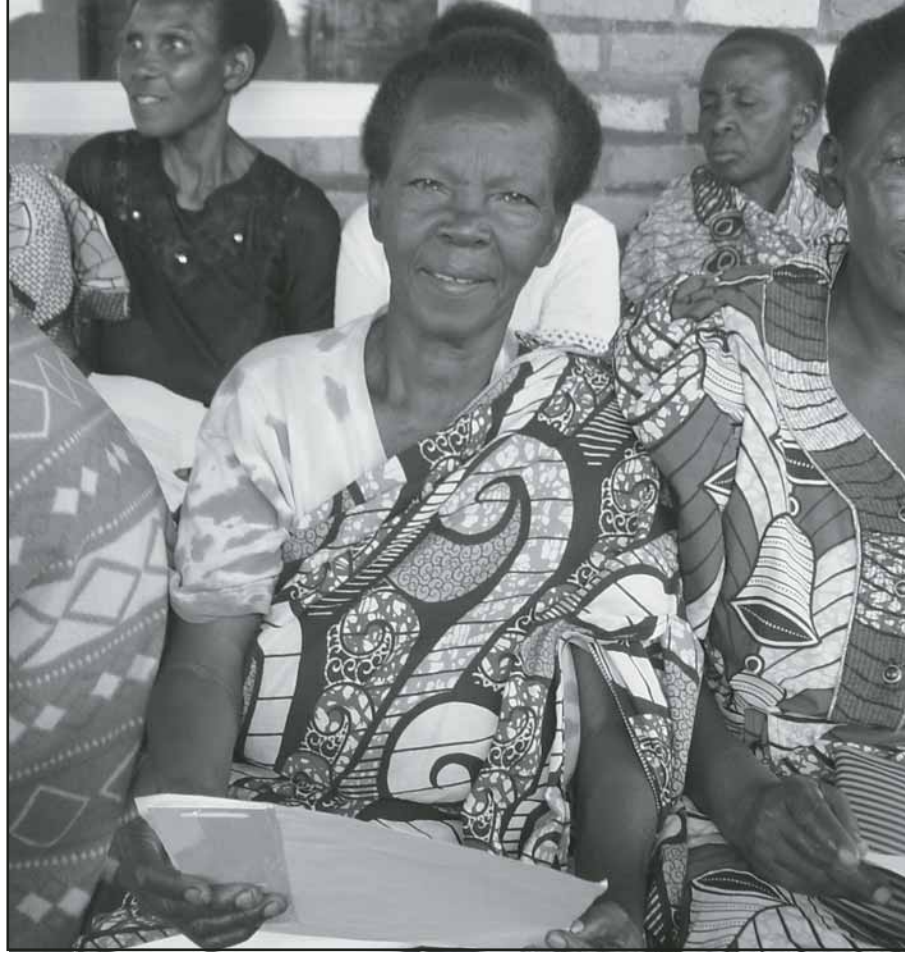
All of this information can be found at the top of the "Meet Your Sponsored Sister" letter included in your Sponsorship Welcome Kit.

Please also keep the following in mind:

- To protect your privacy, do not include your address, phone number or email address in your letters.
- In an effort to help our translators, please send only one letter per month.

Email is an acceptable way to write to your sister. If you choose to email your letters, please include the required information listed above somewhere in the body of your letter. Emailed letters can be sent as attachments or in the body of the email. Digital photos are acceptable as well.

Please mail your letters to Women for Women International, 4455 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite



200, Washington, DC 20008 or email them to sponsorship@womenforwomen.org.

Sending Gifts

We understand that many sponsors want to share more than just sponsorship funds and letters with their sisters. However, due to customs duties and the high cost of overseas shipping, there is a limit to what you can send to your sister. Feel free to send any of the following flat, paper items in small quantities:

- Photos or postcards
- Greeting cards
- Bookmarks
- A sheet of stickers for your sister and her children
- Stationery

If you do send any of the above items, please label them with your sister's full name, woman group and country to ensure delivery to her. Please attach the gift securely to your letter and make sure your letter is also clearly marked with your sister's full name, woman group and country.

Please do not send jewelry of any kind, books of any kind, clothing or pieces of cloth, hand-knitted small items, cosmetics, seeds, food or candy, toys or any other non-paper, non-flat items. They will not be sent to your sister or returned to you. If possible, they will be distributed by our staff to our offices as they travel throughout the countries in which we work.

Making Your Sponsorship Contributions

We want it to be easy and convenient for you to make your sponsorship contributions. We ask that you make the following commitment to sponsor your sister:

- \$30 one-time enrollment fee; and
- \$30 per month (\$390/year) for a minimum of one year.

If you prefer, payments can be made in advance in any installment you choose.

Your sister relies on her monthly sponsorship funds to meet her basic needs. Therefore, if we do not receive sponsorship contributions from you for three months, we will need to end your sponsorship. If you have questions or concerns about your sponsorship contributions at any time, please contact our Finance Department at 202.737.7705 or finance@womenforwomen.org.



Payment by Credit Card

We have found credit card transactions to be the easiest and most convenient way for sponsors to make their contributions. We accept Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover.

- Your \$30 enrollment fee will be charged when you sign up to become a sponsor.
- If you elected to “Begin My Support Today” when you enrolled, your monthly donations of \$30 per sister will begin the month after your enrollment fee is charged.
- If you did not choose to “Begin My Support Today” when you enrolled, your monthly contributions will not be charged until you have been matched with your sister.
- For monthly contributors, charges will occur between the fifth and tenth of each month.
- If you have provided us with an email address, you will receive confirmation of your charge via email each month. We will also email you if we are having difficulty charging your monthly contribution.
- For annual contributors, your full contribution will be charged when you are matched with your sister. You will continue to be charged for your sponsorship annually, unless you notify us that you wish to stop your

sponsorship.

- Please be sure to notify Women for Women International if your credit card account information changes for any reason, including if your card is lost or stolen or the expiration date changes. Please also notify us of any change in your mailing address, email address or the name on your account.

Payment by Check

Each month, you will receive a commitment statement. This statement will provide a detailed record of the amount of your next contribution, the due date of your next contribution, and any outstanding contributions.

- Please mail your payment by the first of each month with the top portion of your monthly commitment statement.



“Your help is significant to me in a material sense, but even more so spiritually, because knowing that someone lives somewhere out there far away who feels for your suffering, revives my soul and makes it easier for us in this difficult life.”

— Zibija, a Bosnian woman, to her sponsor

- All sponsorship payments *must be made in US dollars.*
- Please record your sponsor ID number (which can be found on the top of your monthly commitment statement) on the face of each check so that we can be sure to apply your payment correctly. This is particularly important if the name on your check does not match the name on your account, or if you are a part of a group sponsorship.
- Checks can be sent with letters to your sister, or they can be sent separately.

Tax Deductibility

Women for Women International's Tax ID # is 52-1838756.

Your contributions to Women for Women International may be tax deductible under United States law. At the beginning of each year, Women for Women International will send you a tax receipt detailing the total amount of your tax deductible contributions from the previous year. Please consult with your tax advisor for further information.

If you have additional questions, please contact our Finance Department at finance@womenforwomen.org or 202.737.7705.

Sending Additional Funds to Your Sister

Some sponsors want to send their sisters additional funds. Similarly, some participants have asked their sponsors to send money in addition to their monthly sponsorship contribution. In most disadvantaged communities, however, giving one woman more money than others can have a negative impact on efforts to develop the self-sufficiency of the entire community of women. For that reason, we ask that you do not send any additional funds to your sister. If you wish to contribute additional funds to help women in need, we encourage you to donate to one of our country programs, which support our offices in the field and allow us to develop more services to benefit your sister. More information can be found on our website at www.womenforwomen.org.

Ending Your Sponsorship

After you receive your Sponsorship Welcome Kit, your sponsorship will continue until you provide us 30 days notice to end your participation in the program. This notice allows us to match your sister with another sponsor so we can continue to provide her with uninterrupted support. If you pay by credit card, we will continue to charge your credit card after receiving your notice until your participation in the program ends 30 days later. When your sister graduates you will be automatically matched with a new woman unless you request to end your sponsorship. To end your sponsorship, please contact your sponsorship coordinator by email at sponsorship@womenforwomen.org or by phone at 202.737.7705.



Other Ways You Can Help

Sharing Information

Women for Women International welcomes anyone involved in our programs to help educate others about our organization. We are able to provide you with our promotional video as well as organizational materials for distribution upon your request. You are also welcome to utilize any of the information on our website for promotional use. Please contact Women for Women International for more information.

Workplace Matching Gift Campaigns, CFC/United Way, and State Campaigns

Make your sponsorship contributions go even further by talking to your employer about the Matching Gifts Programs at your office. Many companies will match charitable donations by their employees.

Women for Women International also participates in the Combined Fundraising

Campaign for Federal employees, some United Way Campaigns and some state employee campaigns.

These programs let employees donate to charities directly from their paycheck.

Funds matched by your employer or received from these campaigns cannot be applied to your sponsorship, but will be used to strengthen and expand Women for Women International's programs around the world. If you are interested in learning how to donate through one of these campaigns, talk to your employer or contact Women for Women International.

Please see our website at www.womenforwomen.org to read about other ways you can be involved with Women for Women International.



"I could never even dream that something like this would ever happen to me. That I would become a member of Women for Women International and meet Mary Ann, who lives miles away from Bosnia. Please believe me when I say that I was thrilled when our group leader gave me a letter from you at our meeting. I was so happy because another woman, a mother, is writing to me from the other side of the world."

—A Bosnian woman to her sponsor

Contact Information

*For additional questions about the
Sponsorship Program or your sister,
please contact us by phone at 202.737.7705
or at sponsorship@womenforwomen.org*

*For questions about your monthly
contribution or making your payments,
please contact us by phone at 202.737.7705
or at finance@womenforwomen.org*

*Email your letters to
sponsorship@womenforwomen.org
or mail them to us at the address below.*



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Recipient of the 2006 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize



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